

MEARE PARISH COUNCIL

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

- 1. Complaints about an Employee.** If a member of the public has a complaint about an employee of the Parish Council, they should contact the Chairman of the Council. The matter will be dealt with internally as an employment matter and appropriate action taken as required.
- 2. Complaints about a Councillor.** Councillors are subject to the jurisdiction of the Standards Board, and complainants are advised to contact the Monitoring Officer at Somerset Council for further information.
- 3. Complaints about the administration or procedures of the Council.**
 - a. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the clerk. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk, they may be advised to put it to the Chairman.
 - b. The clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council.
 - c. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
 - d. Seven clear working days prior to a meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.
 - e. The council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
 - f. The chairman to introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
 - g. The complainant (or representative) to outline the grounds for the complaint.
 - h. Councillors to ask any questions of the complainant.
 - i. If relevant, the clerk to explain the council's position,
 - j. Councillors to ask any question of the clerk
 - k. Clerk and complainant to be offered the opportunity of the last word (in this order).
 - l. Clerk and complainant to be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back.
 - m. Clerk and complainant return to hear the decision, or to be advised when the decision will be made. After the Meeting
 - n. Decision to be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Complaints to the Ombudsman against maladministration must be made by an individual. They cannot be made by local authorities. (LGA 1974 s 27 - Source Arnold Baker – Local Council Administration)

Adopted – March 2023
Next review – May 2026